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ABSTRACT

The goal of the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) Making Middle Grades Work initiative is to increase the percentage of eighth-graders who perform at the proficient level in core academic subjects and who leave eighth grade ready for college-prep work in high school. This document contains a comprehensive improvement framework to aid in SREB's effort. The framework discusses the importance of a core curriculum, high expectation of students, classroom practices that engage students, teacher cooperation, parental support, strong leadership, qualified teachers, and the use of technology in instruction. The framework also contains five essential conditions that must exist for a school to increase student achievement: (1) commitment; (2) planning for continuous improvement; (3) curriculum that includes a set of performance standards; (4) support for professional development; and (5) teacher preparation. The remainder of the document is given over to explanations of and forms used for technical assistance visits from SREB consultants. The purpose of the technical assistance visit is to help school leaders and teachers identify changes needed to improve student achievement in the middle grades and to implement the comprehensive improvement framework. (WFA)

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Making Middle Grades Work: Technical Assistance Guide for Site Coordinators.

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Barbara Moore

July 2002

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SREB

Making Middle Grades Work Technical Assistance Guide for Site Coordinators

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Goal :

The goal of the Southern Regional Education Board's Making Middle Grades Work initiative is to increase the percentage of eighth-graders who perform at the proficient level in core academic subjects and who leave eighth grade ready for college-preparatory work in high school. To accomplish this goal, SREB believes that an effort to improve achievement in the middle grades must be based on a comprehensive improvement framework of key practices and essential conditions.

A Comprehensive Improvement Framework

- **An academic core that is aligned to what students must know, understand and be able to do to succeed in college-preparatory English, mathematics and science** - All students in the middle grades need an academic core curriculum that accelerates their learning, that challenges them and that appeals to their interests. This curriculum must include stringent academic requirements:
  - In mathematics, all students satisfactorily complete Algebra I or pass a pre-algebra test of proficiency and use algebra concepts to reason and solve problems.
  - In science, all students use laboratory and technology experiences to learn scientific concepts in physical, life and earth/space sciences.
  - Reading instruction is incorporated into all content areas in the academic core curriculum through grade eight.
  - The language arts curriculum requires students — before they leave eighth grade — to use language correctly and effectively to find, organize and communicate information.
  - The social studies curriculum requires students — before they leave eighth grade — to describe their heritage, their government, their world and economic principles through key issues of the past, present and future.
- **A belief that all students matter** - Each student needs to have a personal relationship with an adult who takes an interest in his or her successful learning, goal-setting, educational planning and personal growth.
- **High expectations and a system of extra help and time** - Students learn in different ways and at different rates. Middle grades students need enough time and help to meet more rigorous, consistent standards for all eighth-graders. The middle grades curriculum should accelerate achievement for all students.
- **Classroom practices that engage students in their learning** - Young adolescents need varied learning activities linked to challenging academic content and opportunities to use skills and concepts in real-world applications.
- **Teachers working together** - All teachers need time to plan together, to develop and coordinate learning activities, and to share student work that meets proficiency standards.
- **Support from parents** - Parents must understand and support higher performance standards in the middle grades.
- **Qualified teachers** - Middle grades teachers must know specific academic content and how to teach young adolescents.
- **Use of data** - States, districts and schools must use data on student, school and teacher performance to review and revise school and classroom practices as needed.
- **Use of technology for learning** - Middle grades students and teachers must have opportunities to explore and use technology to improve knowledge and skills in English/language arts, reading, mathematics, science and social studies.
- **Strong leadership** - Middle grades schools need strong, effective principals who encourage teachers and participate with them in planning and implementing research-based improvements.

Conditions for Raising Achievement

Five essential conditions must exist in order for a school to increase student achievement:

- **Commitment** - State partners, the local school board, district leaders and the community must commit to fully implementing the comprehensive improvement framework.
- **Planning for continuous improvement** - District and school leaders must create an organizational structure and a process that will provide both time and means for faculty and administrators to discuss and plan actions needed to raise student achievement. Leaders will work with faculty in deciding what to teach, how to teach, what to expect students to learn and how to evaluate student learning.
- **Curriculum** - District leaders must support and encourage a curriculum review and alignment that compares all curricula to state, national and international standards. As a result, a set of content and performance standards will define the quantity and quality of work expected at each grade level throughout the system.
- **Support for professional development** - District and school leaders must provide leadership and financial support for professional development that is directly connected to academic standards and student achievement needs. Professional development will include support for teachers in the classroom as they implement teaching practices with evidence of effectiveness.
- **Teacher preparation** - The local school board should encourage teachers who do not have a major or minor in their teaching assignment to upgrade their content knowledge through academic courses and should hire teachers with content backgrounds that match their teaching assignment, e.g., a subject area major or minor.

Technical Assistance Visits

The purpose of technical assistance (TA) visits is to help school leaders and teachers identify changes needed to improve student achievement in the middle grades and to implement the comprehensive improvement framework. Technical assistance teams help sites by working with teachers, counselors and administrators to develop action steps that:

- focus on a rigorous, challenging academic core curriculum;
- examine how the school and its adults relate to students;
- raise expectations for student achievement and help students meet higher standards;
- improve how teachers relate to each other;
- improve how the school relates to parents;
- improve how schools work with sending elementary and receiving high schools to ensure continuous learning for all students;
- expand guidance and advisement to ensure that all students leave grade eight with a five-year education plan developed jointly with their parents;
- collect and use data for decision-making; and
- use technology to support comprehensive school improvement.

The most important component of the visit is the team member. Team members are responsible for reviewing the data and getting to know the school as well as possible before the visit. They observe classes, interview administrators, teachers, counselors and students, and help develop the site report.

What happens before the visit takes place?

SREB, state and local MMGW coordinators have significant responsibilities before the technical assistance visit takes place. The first important responsibility is selecting and notifying the team.

Who selects the TA team?

The local MMGW coordinator/principal selects representatives for the TA team. The number of team members depends on the size of the school and the number of classrooms to be visited. The TA team attempts to visit every classroom at least once during the visit. The team should represent the entire school community. The TA team consists of individuals from within the state and local district and should include:

- a representative from each elementary school sending students to the middle grades school;
- representatives from the core academic disciplines in the high school(s) that receive students from the middle grades site;
- a member of the local board of education and/or business/industry representative;
- parent(s);
- the site coordinator and/or other representative(s) from other MMGW sites within the state; and
- the state MMGW coordinator or a school improvement consultant from the state department of education or from a regional service center.

When selecting team members, be sure that each understands and agrees to the necessary time commitment. While team members should be present for the duration of the visit, each team member **must be on time for the beginning meeting on day one and must remain at least through the evening of day two**. It is the site coordinator's responsibility to communicate personally with each team member and to ensure that each individual is informed of the purpose of the visit and the time commitment involved.

Who sends the list of team members to SREB?

The state coordinator sends SREB the names and addresses of all team members **30 days prior to each visit**. SREB should also receive copies of all materials sent to team members. If the state leader does not send the list, the local site must do so within the same time frame.

When are sites notified of visits?

MMGW sites should schedule technical assistance visit dates directly with SREB staff and the state coordinator as soon as possible during the first year of membership in the MMGW network.

What is the primary focus of the visiting team?

The visiting team focuses on three areas:

- identifying the site's outstanding practices as they relate to the comprehensive framework and the essential conditions,
- discussing or examining improvement actions planned by the site, and
- describing the major challenges the site faces.

How long does a visit last?

Most visits begin at approximately 4 p.m. of day one and end by noon on day three. A more detailed description of what occurs during the visit is on page six of this guide. The local site should plan the third day around the superintendent's and team leader's schedules.

Who determines the agenda?

The local site coordinator develops the agenda in discussion with the state coordinator and the team leader. The agenda should resemble the one on page four; however, changes may be needed to accommodate local site schedules.

The principal and/or site coordinator schedule the time and location for each group interview. The team leader assigns team members to the interviews. The principal and/or site coordinator select the students and teachers to be interviewed. Students and teachers are interviewed in a group setting. Interview times may be changed, depending on the needs of the site, and should be coordinated with the team leader. Interviews, if possible, should take place between noon and 3 p.m. Be sure to include the locations of interviews and other meetings on the agenda. The team leader will always interview the superintendent and the students. There also should be time set aside for the team leader to talk to the principal.

Who pays the team's expenses?

SREB pays the expenses of its representatives. The state covers expenses of state representatives or a representative from another state who leads a visit. The host site covers expenses of team members from the local community.

MMGW Technical Assistance Team Visit
Sample Agenda

School _____ Date _____

First Day (Day of Week)

4 - 6 p.m. Technical Assistance Team orientation for two hours with the team leader [Location]

6 - 7 p.m. The MMGW School Improvement Team informs the technical assistance team about the site's accomplishments, next action steps and major challenges. [Location]

Second Day (Day of Week)

7:30 a.m. Team organizational meeting [Location]

7:45 a.m. Classroom observations start when students begin classes and run until lunchtime.

Lunch [Location]

1 - 3 p.m. Interviews of the following audiences by selected members of the technical assistance team:

- A group of 10 to 12 eighth-graders, chosen at random [Location]
- The school principal [Location]
- A group of 10 to 12 teachers representing all grade levels, all core academic subjects and the related arts [Location]
- The superintendent or assistant superintendent for instruction [Location]
- Guidance counselor(s) [Location]
- A group of parents [Location]

1 - 3 p.m. Other classroom visits as necessary

3 - 7 p.m. The visiting team meets to discuss findings and prepare the draft report.

Third Day (Day of Week)

7 - 9 a.m. The visiting team meets to discuss the final report. [Location]

9 a.m. An exit conference is held with the superintendent and site leaders. [Allow at least one hour.]

State MMGW Coordinator's Responsibilities

The State MMGW Coordinator manages the TA team for each visit in his or her state. Responsibilities include:

- communicating to site leaders the importance of the TA visit and the extent of their responsibilities;
- helping site leaders understand that the visit is not an accreditation visit or state regulatory visit, but a visit in which the team celebrates the accomplishments and efforts of the site and shares ideas with the superintendent and site leaders on how to address some of the challenges faced in ensuring quality learning for all students;
- working with the site coordinator to select the members of the TA team;
- assisting sites in reviewing comprehensive framework indicators and identifying information to mail to team members;
- working with the site coordinator to reserve the necessary block of rooms for TA team members and arrange transportation, if necessary, for visiting team members;
- helping the site team develop the schedule of activities for the TA visit;
- serving as on-site liaison between the visiting team and the site; and
- sending the list of team members with addresses and telephone numbers to SREB one month prior to the visit. **Note: If the state MMGW coordinator does not send a list of team members to SREB, the site coordinator must provide the list to SREB four weeks in advance of the visit with addresses and telephone numbers.**

MMGW Site Coordinator's Responsibilities

The local coordinator of each MMGW site is responsible for sending the following information to all members of the TA team at least 14 days prior to the visit:

- an agenda with times and locations for meetings and interviews, the name of the hotel where team members are staying with a map to the hotel, a map to the school, the school's floor plan, and a master class schedule that lists the names of all teachers and the locations of all classes including any classes away from the main building; (Visiting team members will want to visit every class or teacher to get a clear picture of the range of opportunities for all students.)
- MMGW Team Member Guide;
- MMGW School Data Profile and Middle Grades Assessment data (or a summary of highlights from the student assessment and student and teacher surveys);
- state and/or district student performance data; and
- site action plan.

The site coordinator should:

- make reservations at a hotel near the site for all team members not from the local area (including the state coordinator and team leader) and prepare name tags for everyone;
- organize presentation (day one) of the site's accomplishments related to the middle grades comprehensive framework and essential conditions, summarize the site's action plan, and identify challenges faced by the site in implementing MMGW;
- prepare a schedule of the visit, including locations and times of group interviews with teachers, students, counselors, parents, and school and central office administrators;
- set up an exit interview with the school superintendent and other staff; and
- arrange a workroom with computers, an easel and chart paper, pads of paper and pens, and Post-it notes for the visiting team. Prepare a display of the following materials in the workroom for the team members:
  - student handbook;
  - curriculum descriptions;
  - copies of the most recent assessment report;
  - examples of students' proposed high school plans;
  - literature given by counselors to students to help them plan their high school program of study; and
  - samples of quality student work from academic classes.

What happens during the visit?

Day One

The TA team orientation begins promptly at 4 p.m. The local site coordinator should be available if needed to assist in developing interview and classroom observation schedules.

At approximately 6 p.m., the TA team meets for 30 to 60 minutes with site leaders, including the principal, the school improvement team, teacher leaders and others invited by the site. This is a good time to educate the entire faculty about MMGW. Site representatives will answer the following questions:

- What are your outstanding practices? What have you done to implement the 10 components of the comprehensive framework?
- What do you intend to do next? What improvement actions have you planned?
- What are the major challenges you face in improving the quality of student learning?

After this presentation, TA team members will review materials and complete their observation and interview schedules for the next day. Sites that want to have a dinner for the team should do so on this evening, but it is not required. A dinner should **not** be planned for the second night, but the team leader may ask for sandwiches to be served since the team will be working late.

Day Two

The TA team leader will meet with team members at 7:30 a.m. (or about 30 minutes before classes begin) to review schedules. Team members will spend about 15 minutes in each classroom and will need access to all classes. The site coordinator should encourage teachers not to test on the day team members visit classes.

Team members will need at least 45 minutes to interview each group of students, teachers, parents, counselors and administrators.

At 3 p.m. (or about 30 minutes after the end of classes), TA team members will meet to discuss the information they have collected and observed. The team will prepare a draft outline of the exit report that evening.

Day Three

The TA team will meet at approximately 7:30 a.m. to review and polish the exit report. The team usually meets with school and system leaders at 9 a.m. to discuss the TA team's findings and recommendations. The technical assistance visit usually ends between 10 and 10:30 a.m.

How do administrators, teachers and counselors get ready for the TA visit?

Everyone should know that a technical assistance team will be visiting the school and that the visit is not evaluative in nature. All administrators, teachers, counselors, parents and students should be aware that the team will be in the school and may visit any or all classrooms.

Many MMGW sites have completed a self-study using a rating scale for each readiness indicator of the Comprehensive Improvement Framework components. SREB suggests that the site involve as many staff as possible in this assessment so they understand more about MMGW and why the team is making the visit. Linking the components of the Comprehensive Improvement Framework to school and classroom practices and reviewing the status of the site help administrators, counselors and teachers establish new actions to improve the school. Preparation for the TAV requires an honest effort by the school to find out its most outstanding practices, actions needed for improved achievement and the major challenges facing the site.

What happens after the visit?

After the visit, the team leader prepares the report for SREB. SREB staff edit the report to ensure its compliance with SREB's format/style and send the first draft to the school principal, members of the technical assistance team, and state and local MMGW coordinators for their input. Once this input is received, SREB makes needed corrections, additions or deletions, and sends the official report to the superintendent. **It is the responsibility of the district superintendent to disseminate the final report.**

After the school receives the report, SREB recommends that site leaders plan how to share the report with the entire staff. The report should be used to update the site's action plan, to make curricular changes and to make decisions about needed staff development. SREB suggests that the report be shared with parents, business and community leaders, and representatives from the high school(s). The report should be a clear road map for the future direction of the school.

APPENDICES

The appendices include an explanation of team members' responsibilities and examples of forms the site can reproduce or modify as needed, as well as examples of questions to be used in the group interviews. **The site coordinator must read the *Team Member Guide* included in the mailing of technical assistance visit materials. The guide for team members includes vital information that is not included in the *Technical Assistance Guide for Site Coordinators*.**

Who Does What?

Before the Visit

SREB

- Contacts state and site coordinators with information about a possible schedule for the visits.
- Gets responses from sites, communicates with state coordinators and schedules all site visits.
- Prepares for and leads two visits to each state.
- Sends technical assistance guide to each site coordinator with instructions, sample forms and TA visit materials.

State Coordinator

- Assists site in selecting TA team.
- Sends SREB the list of TA team members (names, job titles, addresses, telephone numbers) at least four weeks before the visit.
- Works with the site to communicate the purpose and importance of the visit and the activities to be completed by the site.
- Reminds site to send letters to team with necessary information.
- Helps site with self-study and schedule.
- Helps site with logistics, hotel reservations, etc.

Local Coordinator

- Selects technical assistance team in cooperation with the state coordinator.
- Provides an overview for team members of the MMGW effort and their responsibilities as members of the team (including being on time and staying for the entire visit).
- Sends every team member appropriate information as listed in the technical assistance guide.
- Gathers appropriate materials for the team's workroom as described in the guide.
- Makes hotel reservations.
- Has nametags and parking places for the team.
- Prepares and plans the agenda, interviews and class visits. Schedules exit conference.
- Plans dinner on first night if there is to be one.
- Notifies teachers and students of scheduled TA visit.

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During the Visit

- Orients and prepares the team for the visit.
- Visits academic and related arts classes. Interviews students, teachers, parents, counselors and administrators.
- Makes the exit report to the team, superintendent, principal, local coordinator and others at the site.

After the Visit

- Writes and/or edits all reports.
- Returns first draft to TA team, state and site coordinators for input.
- Revises report as needed.
- Mails official report to the local superintendent.

- Arranges transportation to and from the airport and to and from the school and hotel as needed.
- Acts as liaison between the site and team leader and serves as a member of the team.

- Reviews draft of report and contacts SREB with any changes needed.
- Does follow-up with site to see that suggestions in the report are used for site action planning and revisions to the school improvement plan.

- Coordinates site presentation to the team on the first night:
  - outstanding practices;
  - next steps planned; and
  - major challenges faced.
- Provides coffee, snacks, etc., for the team.
- Provides appropriate work space and materials for team use, including computer availability.

- Reads the draft report and responds with comments.
- Uses the report in reviewing and updating the site action plan, planning staff development, making curriculum modifications, and implementing the middle grades framework and essential conditions.

Team Member List

Site Name

Date of Visit

State

Name	Address	Telephone Number E-mail	Type of Member (business/industry, English teacher, counselor, administrator, postsecondary representative, etc.)

Pre-visit Checklist

Things to send to the team leader four weeks in advance of the visit:

- ❒ team member names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and titles
- ❒ map of school
- ❒ master schedule with teacher names, classes, room numbers and bell schedule
- ❒ school profile letter or brochure
- ❒ most recent test scores, state test data and/or standardized test scores
- ❒ any update needed to MMGW School Data Profile sent to SREB
- ❒ course offerings, course descriptions and programs of study
- ❒ current school improvement plan

Arrangements to be made by the site coordinator in advance of the visit:

- ❒ hotel reservations for those team members coming from out-of-town
- ❒ light snack for first day and second day in the afternoon (optional)*
- ❒ coffee, juice, light morning snack for mornings of second and third days (optional)*
- ❒ information about restaurants for out-of-town team members
- ❒ lunch for second day, preferably school cafeteria
- ❒ parking spaces for team members
- ❒ meeting room reserved for team use (a separate area without traffic or interruptions)
- ❒ name tags for team members
- ❒ agenda for team visit including identification of meeting times and places for interviews (Team leader will assign team members to interviews.)

Supplies needed for the technical assistance teamwork room:**

- ❒ easel with chart pad, markers and masking tape
- ❒ Post-it notes
- ❒ writing tablets, pens, highlighters and pencils
- ❒ stapler and paper clips
- ❒ computer and printer

Presentation for the technical assistance team:***

- ❒ description of outstanding practices
- ❒ specific next steps completed or planned by the school to implement the MMGW comprehensive framework and essential conditions
- ❒ description of the challenges facing the implementation process

*If food will not be available, please notify your team leader.

**If these supplies will not be available, please notify your team leader.

***The presentation should include a handout summarizing key points for each team member.

Pre-visit Memorandum

Logistics of Arrival and Departure

Site leaders should fill out the top portion and then send this form to members of the TA team three to four weeks before the visit to facilitate overnight and travel arrangements.

You are scheduled to participate in a TA visit to:

_____
SCHOOL CITY STATE DATE

The initial team meeting will begin promptly at 4 p.m. at _____

If you need a hotel reservation, one will be made for you at:

_____
HOTEL

_____
ADDRESS PHONE NUMBER ROOM RATE

(Please plan to arrive at the hotel no later than 3 p.m.)

If you are driving, maps are enclosed to help you find the hotel and the school.

If you are flying, due to gate access restrictions at the airports, please call the person listed below to arrange transportation from the airport to the hotel.

_____
NAME PHONE NUMBER E-MAIL

Please return this portion of the form to: _____ (site coordinator)

by: _____ (date) at: _____ (fax number).

Members of the TA team need to provide the following information:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____ E-MAIL _____

_____
TIME OF ARRIVAL FLIGHT # AIRLINE

_____
TIME OF DEPARTURE FLIGHT # AIRLINE

Hotel room needed: Yes _____ No _____ Smoking _____ Non-smoking _____

Would you share a room with another team member? Yes _____ No _____

Interview Questions

Student Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your school to a friend?

2. In terms of learning, how much do your teachers expect of you? (None, a little or a great deal?) Give examples. How do you think high school will be different from this school?

3. Quality learning is the result of considerable effort to do something exceedingly well. Give an example of an experience that required you to work hard and in which you did well. An example might be a recent discussion, an oral presentation or a real-world problem.

4. What major research paper or project did you complete in middle school that took a great deal of time outside of class? What did you learn from the experience? How often do you have this kind of assignment?

5.* What was the last book you read? How many books or articles have you read this year both in and out of school? Do you have reading assignments in every class?

6. If you are failing a course or are on the borderline, what extra help can you get from your teachers or your school?

7. What are the most important school rules? Are they enforced consistently and fairly for all students?

8.* How much time do you spend on homework each night? How much time do you spend watching TV?

9. Have you talked with anyone about what courses you should take in high school? If so, whom? How are your parents involved in planning your high school program of study? What courses do you plan to take in ninth grade?

10.* What changes would you make in this school to help more students achieve at high levels?

11. What are the most important school rules, and are they enforced consistently and fairly for all students?

*** Denotes that the interviewer should have each student respond to the questions.**

Teacher Interview Questions

1. How is your school using the MMGW comprehensive framework to raise standards for all students? Cite specific actions or programs. Are you involved in helping develop and implement the MMGW school improvement plan? How?

2. What methods do you use to assess student performance? How do you use examples of high quality student work to demonstrate expectations for student assignments? Do you provide these examples to students? To parents?

3.* What is the best example of a quality lesson you taught in the past year that really motivated students and caused them to work hard? How do you motivate students to work harder and to do quality work?

4. How do students apply what they have learned in core academic classes to fine and related arts or exploratory courses?

5. How do you get students to analyze, revise and clarify work regularly to make it more effective in communicating the intended message or thought?

6. How often are students required to complete writing assignments and oral presentations according to specific performance criteria in all subject areas?

7. How do you group students for instruction? Are students assessed and regrouped frequently? How do students have choices in the classroom and school? Give examples.

8. How do you work with other teachers to develop performance criteria for quality work? How do you share your knowledge of student strengths, weaknesses and progress with other teachers to plan instruction and deliver curriculum that is aligned and challenging?

9. How do students who have not mastered the core academic standards receive extra time and help to achieve mastery?

10. How are you involved in the guidance and advisement of students? How often do you schedule conferences with all families?

11. How do school leaders support teachers in planning instruction and getting more students to meet high standards?

12. What are the most important school rules, and are they enforced consistently and fairly for all students?

*** Denotes that the interviewer should have each teacher respond to the questions.**

Counselor Interview Questions

1. How do adults in this school communicate high expectations for all students?
   How does the school encourage and sustain student commitment to academic and career goals?

2. How are all adults in this school involved in guidance and advisement activities for students?
   How does this school ensure that each student is supported by at least one adult who takes an interest in his or her successful learning and personal growth?
   If there is a teacher-based advisory program, what is the counselor's role?

3. How and when do you involve parents in planning a student's program of study?
   What data do you use to help students plan their high school programs of study?
   What are you doing to create "reality checks" so students begin to see that they have much to do to prepare for their next step beyond high school?

4. How does the school plan and coordinate transitions for students entering and exiting the middle school?

5. How does the school involve families in helping all students focus, plan and pursue a challenging high school program of study? What are the barriers to family involvement?
   How are you addressing existing barriers?

6. How is information on student progress reported to faculty, families and the community in a timely manner? Is information specific to groups within the school?
   (e.g., racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, etc.)

7. What are the most important school rules, and are they enforced consistently and fairly for all students?

8. How often are conferences scheduled with families? In what ways do students participate in these conferences?

Parent Interview Questions

1. How has the school changed what is taught, how teachers teach and how student performance is measured to better prepare all students for high school?
2. How do adults in this school communicate high expectations for all students?
3. Do you know what knowledge, skills and qualities your child will need to do challenging work in high school? What is this school doing to prepare your child for success in high school?
4. How have you been involved in helping your child plan for the future and complete a high school program of study? What information has your child received about high school graduation requirements and further study or work after high school?
5. What evidence do you have that your child has completed high quality work while in middle school? Do you receive examples of student work that meets these standards?
6. How much is your child required to read outside of class? In all subjects?
7. How do students who need extra help get it?
8. How do the school staff and teachers communicate with you? Are you encouraged to share information with them?
9. How is information on student progress reported to you in a timely manner? What evidence is provided that students from various racial and socioeconomic groups are progressing at similar rates?
10. What are the most important school rules, and are they enforced consistently and fairly for all students?
11. Do students have choices in this school? Give examples.

Administrator Interview Questions

1. What are the school's goals and priorities, and do all teachers, students and parents know them? How do parents, teachers, students and community members provide suggestions on ways to improve the school?

2. How have you organized the school to achieve your goals and the key practices of MMGW?

3. How do you develop teacher ownership and commitment to the MMGW program? How much staff turnover has occurred since the school joined the network, and how do you orient new teachers to MMGW?

4. How do adults in this school communicate high expectations for all students?

5. How is information on student progress reported to staff and parents in a timely manner? What evidence is provided that students from various racial and socioeconomic groups are progressing at similar rates?

6. How does the school collect, analyze and use data as a basis for making decisions or identifying need for improvements? Cite examples.

7. How has the school changed what is taught, how teachers teach and how student performance is measured to better prepare all students for high school?

8. How often do you spend time in the classroom to observe and support teaching and learning? How do you provide feedback from observations to the faculty?

9. What opportunities do the school and district provide for teachers to work together to improve teaching and learning? How do teachers examine student work and develop criteria for quality work that meets performance standards? Do teachers provide these examples to students? To parents?

10. How do students who have not mastered the core academic standards receive extra time and help to achieve mastery?

11. How do students have choices in the classroom and schoolwide? What kinds of contact do you have with students?

12. What are the most important school rules, and are they enforced consistently and fairly for all students?

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